

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

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FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Rural schools struggle with new grad rules

Districts say they don't have the same flexibility as larger districts

By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Monday, November 10, 2008

Deary High School Principal Darrah Eggers isn't sure how smaller school districts such as his will comply with new state-mandated high school graduation requirements.

"I'm not saying we don't need more requirements," he said. "I'm just saying some of the requirements are going to be difficult for small schools to add in."

The Idaho State Board of Education approved graduation requirements in 2006 that will go into effect in fall 2009 for the class of 2013. Students will have to take four credits of lab science and two additional credits of math that will be taken in their senior year.

They also will have to take the SAT, ACT or Compass test by their junior year and complete a senior project prior to graduation.

Area school districts are struggling to address concerns of parents and students and the increased credits the districts will be required to offer. Some say smaller districts will be hit disproportionately hard by the changes.

Eggers said the Whitepine School District doesn't yet have a plan.

"Right now we're just kind of waiting and talking amongst ourselves and looking at what some other small districts are doing," he said.

He expects to begin taking a hard look at the Deary High School curriculum and master schedule in December. Because of the district's size, district officials will have to completely rewrite the master schedule, Eggers said.

"I don't know exactly how larger districts do it, but just from the personnel and staffing standpoint a large school could offer algebra five times a day, whereas a small school might just have it once," he said.

Moscow High School administrators are facing the same issues as smaller districts but on a different scale.

Moscow parents raised concerns last month when they learned part of the high school redesign proposal included axing one of two years of U.S. history. They're also worried that increasing math and science requirements without changing the bell schedule will create conflicts for students who want to take electives.

Genesee School District Superintendent David Neumann said smaller schools can offer fewer of those electives to begin with, so increased requirements make schedules even tighter.

Idaho Deputy Superintendent of School Support Services Nick Smith said the state Department of Education is aware of those challenges and will request funding from the Legislature for fiscal year 2011 to hire about 91 new teachers throughout the state.

"Every school is going to need additional math and science teachers," he said. "There's going to be a need for increase."

Smith said the most difficult part of implementing the requirements will be recruiting math and science teachers to rural districts. The department of education's rural schools task force is expected to present recommendations to the Legislature in the upcoming session.

Genesee School, along with Deary High School, most likely will be adopting a new master schedule to cope with the changing requirements. Troy High School will have less rearranging to do since it already has added a senior project and another lab science class.

Genesee music teacher Kelly Caldwell is heading up the district's committee to examine how to implement the changes.

He said the committee already has recognized the district will have to change the bell schedule to satisfy the requirements and meet the needs of students, which he says is the most important factor.

"Every school district's going to have to deal with the changes in the way they see is the best fit for their kids."

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OUR VIEW: Patrol rifles in school not the right answer (Editorial)

By Steve McClure

Posted on: Monday, November 10, 2008

Police in Coeur d'Alene want the school board there to give them the green light to bring patrol rifles into the schools.

There's an inevitable chill that runs down your spine when you begin to consider that such a proposition even makes it on the agenda of a school board these days.

Police reason that school resource officers need more firepower available to them in incidents that involve heavily armed attackers in the schools. They note that the officers' handguns have an effective range of 75 feet, while a rifle could be effective up to 1,200 feet.

Their proposal includes keeping the rifle locked in a secure location within the school, and then removing the rifle each day when the officer leaves. They say keeping the rifle on school grounds makes more sense than keeping the rifle in a patrol car in the parking lot.

"If it's out in their vehicle in the parking lot, that wouldn't be a situation where they'd be able to get to that rifle," Coeur d'Alene Police Capt. Ron Clark told the school board.

Such is the era we live in. School shootings in communities across the country - including the Pacific Northwest - have opened our eyes to the potential for tragedy. This plan, though, is not the answer.

If there's a shooter roaming the halls of a high school, it's likely that a rifle locked in a safe somewhere on campus would be just as difficult to access as the rifle in a patrol car.

We know the dangers law enforcement officers face every day when they go out on patrol - whether it's on the road or in the school, and it's not difficult to follow the tactical reasoning presented by law enforcement.

However, we don't know that it's possible for a school resource officer to match firepower with an assailant who, in most cases, has planned ahead for the officer's presence and his capabilities.

- Steve McClure, for the editorial board

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Gooding school superintendent asks gov for advice

GOODING, Idaho (AP) -- The Gooding School District faces a significant loss of state money because many of its students have quit to attend a charter school, and district Superintendent Heather Williams is turning to Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter for advice.

In an Oct. 24 letter to the governor, Williams said the expected loss of state money will hurt academic programs in the south-central Idaho farming community.

The district lost 120 students - about 10 percent of its total enrollment - to North Valley Academy, a charter school that opened this fall in Gooding. The academy, with 162 students, plans to open its high school next fall, which would have room for an additional 96 students - about a third of Gooding High School's enrollment.

In Idaho, public school funding is based on the average daily attendance in the previous school year.

"We're going to have to look at not just personnel cuts but program cuts," Williams told The Times-News.

Idaho has encouraged charter schools as an alternative to the traditional public school system. Statewide, more than 30 charter schools have been established since the state law allowing them was passed in 1998.

"I am personally not opposed to charter schools, but in a community our size it's difficult," Williams said.

Idaho public schools chief Tom Luna has created a rural education task force to recommend solutions for smaller school districts suffering from a downturn in enrollment. The Legislature is expected to consider the recommendations in 2009.

"The Gooding School District is not the only district facing declining enrollment statewide," Idaho Department of Education spokeswoman Melissa McGrath told The Times-News in an e-mail.

Otter spokesman Jon Hanian said the governor's office will respond to Williams, who said she is looking for guidance in mapping out her district's long-term future.

"I don't know what the plan is," Williams said. "Do they want us to close our doors and open up a charter school?"

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Nampa schools launch newsletter

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 11/11/08

Parents of Nampa School District students will receive the first of four quarterly newsletters in November.

The School and Family Matters newsletter will be mailed to every parent and includes information about school safety, student test scores and school report cards, ways for parents to get involved in education, and information about online resources.

It is published in English and Spanish.

For more information, call Allison Westfall, the district's public information officer, at 468-4602.

College of Idaho hall of fame will honor four professors

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 11/11/08

The College of Idaho will induct F. F. Beale, J. J. Smith, Walter Cervený and Fern Nolte Davidson to the Music Hall of Fame on Nov. 16 with a ceremony and performance, followed by a memorial for Davidson.

These four musicians and music teachers helped dignify the College's music program and illuminated the Boise Valley's music scene for years.

Photographs and plaques will be dedicated at 2:30 p.m. in the Langroise Hall foyer on The C of I campus. At 3 p.m., there will be music and spoken tributes in Jewett Auditorium, followed by the memorial to Davidson. All events are free and open to the public.

PowerSchool gives Nampa elementary parents online access

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 11/11/08

For the first time, parents of Nampa School District elementary students will have a tool to monitor their children's grades and attendance.

Parents of elementary students can sign up for the free Web-based service in November at parent teacher conferences.

Parents should contact their child's school for information about how to receive a user-name and password to access their child's information.

For several years, the district provided online access for parents of middle and high school students to monitor student progress via the Web. Passage of a supplemental levy in May helped support the extension of the PowerSchool system to the district's 15 elementary schools.

More information is available at www.nsd131.org under the PowerSchool icon.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

ISU's Vailas to present model for medical school

BY YANN RANAIVO
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POCATELLO — Idaho State University President Arthur Vailas will present a business plan for a distributive medical school model Wednesday before a specially formed legislative committee.

Vailas, who presented the concept and outlined ISU's existing medical resources in a prior committee meeting in September, has been part of a university presidents' group that has assisted the committee in understanding the health care shortfalls facing Idaho.

The need for more doctors in Idaho was reaffirmed recently by a Florida-based consultant's report on medical resources in the state. The report was commissioned two years ago but was only reviewed by the committee this summer. Language in the study suggests that the state should establish a medical education program.

The Gem State sits 49th in the number of doctors per capita, and medical school supporters believe an independent program will alleviate the shortage. Others have expressed support for enlarging the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho Medical Program, which sends a small number of Idaho students to the University of Washington's School of Medicine.

The committee, which comprises members of both the House and the Senate and was created solely to consider the proposed medical school, has also identified a number of other ongoing health care issues since it first convened in August.

In September, the committee invited rural hospital administrators, who discussed how smaller and underfunded entities such as Bear Lake Memorial Hospital withstand tight budgets by recruiting health professionals locally through innovative programs.

The committee will also hear presentations from WWAMI and some residency programs Wednesday to study the success of the state's existing medical programs.

Portraits honor military veterans

Drawings set for display at program

BY DEBBIE BRYCE

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AMERICAN FALLS — Taiya Franco, a junior at American Falls High School, admits she was nervous when asked to create a portrait of the school's principal, Jeff Reed.

But his reaction to the work of art put her fears to rest.

"I was afraid if it didn't turn out well, he would think that I didn't like him," said Franco, whose parents are Amber and Doug Henrie, of American Falls, and Robert Franco, of Elko, Nev. "I'm really glad he liked it."

Franco was one of four art students who took on the task of portraying veterans in portraits to be displayed at the school's annual Veterans Day program. The 22-inch by 28-inch portraits were done in graphite and charcoal.

Reed, who served with the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam, said he first saw the portrait while Franco was working on it.

"(Taiya) was trying to put the white beard on the white paper," he said. "It turned out really well."

This year's program is a collaboration between the school's art, drama and music departments.

Lori Piccolo-Stinson, who teaches jewelry, painting, pottery and sculpture at the school, said art students drew portraits of veterans, drama students prepared a series of readings from interviews with veterans and the band performed a selection of patriotic music.

"These kids took it on as extra work," Piccolo-Stinson said. "They were asked to draw family members or someone they knew who was a veteran."

A Pocatello resident, Piccolo-Stinson also operates a gallery on North Main Street.

Reed said the program was aimed at integrating several learning areas and emphasizing the value of art programs in public schools.

Reed said he'll enjoy today's Veteran's Day show from the audience.

"I'm actually one of the ones who gets to sit back and enjoy some nice paintings and some good music," he said.

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Selfless sacrifice

Tiebreaker students pay homage to veterans

By CLARK CORBIN ccorbin@postregister.com

Robert Bower / rbower@postregister.com - Tiebreaker Elementary School students honored veterans Monday morning with a special program of songs and thank-yous for the service they have given.

Dozens of American flags lined the drive outside Tiebreaker Elementary School on Monday, serving as a preview of the main event inside. Students, adorned with red poppies on their shirts, serenaded local veterans with a half-dozen patriotic songs as tears welled up in parents' eyes and video cameras rolled.

Then, after calling veterans of all ages and from several wars onto the stage, the entire student body, the staff and the rest of the audience rose in standing ovation.

It was all a part of the students' efforts to honor three dozen local veterans during a salute that lasted more than an hour.

The all-out effort moved Dennis Peterson, one of the honorees who served in the Navy from 1963 to 1969, to tears.

"It brought tears to my eyes," he said. "I was really impressed by these kids."

Tiebreaker third-graders began the Veterans Day assembly by singing songs for the veterans, including "Thank a Vet," "Americans We" and an armed forces medley.

Later, students presented many of the veterans with letters of thanks penned by entire classes.

"This was great," Navy veteran Darrel Summers said. "It kind of brought out those feelings we had years ago when we (enlisted and) decided to dedicate that part of our lives to this nation."

Tiebreaker Principal Kent Patterson urged each of his students to go home and ask permission to call grandparents, uncles and other relatives who served and offer thanks.

The event was organized by music teacher LaNae Porter, who said her goal was to make sure students understand the sacrifices a veteran makes.

Many students said they now recognize the importance of celebrating Veterans Day.

"I think it's important because people were willing to risk their lives, and it's really cool they love our country so much that they'd do that," sixth-grader Makenna Adamson said.

The school's celebration didn't end Monday, though.

Tiebreaker is one of at least three Idaho Falls schools that have been collecting cans of food to be sent to veterans homes in Boise and Pocatello. Students plan to load the cans into an Army truck early this morning.

Around town, a host of other events and ceremonies are planned to commemorate Veterans Day. Peterson is thankful the community is honoring its veterans, and he is proud that the younger generation at Tiebreaker helped lead that effort.

"They're quite the patriotic group," Peterson said. "And I think it's important that they understand what a veteran is."

Reaching a goal

Junior high girls raise funds for senior center's meals program

By CLARK CORBIN ccorbin@postregister.com

Kaylani Neubauer and Miranda Moore proved that two Idaho Falls teens can help preserve an important program for area seniors.

The Eagle Rock Junior High School students, who were first profiled in the Moose section Oct. 28, raised \$566.21 for the Idaho Falls Senior Citizens Community Center's Home-Cooked Meals and Home-Delivered Meals programs.

The girls learned that the program was struggling to meet rising costs and launched a massive fundraising campaign through their school's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America club.

Their actions brought smiles to the faces of more than 70 seniors who gathered at the center for a lunch and ceremonial check presentation Wednesday.

"I'm just so proud of them," said Stella Peterson, an 84-year-old who plays bingo and eats lunch at the center each week.

Peterson heard about the girls' fundraising project and raised money among her bingo team to help the girls meet their goal.

The girls made posters and collected \$2 donations from classmates, teachers and parents during lunch periods last month to raise the money. Laura Flint, executive director of the senior center, said the program is struggling but that donations like these help keep the warm meals coming.

A sign on the center's door noted that the average meal costs \$6.55 while the average donation per plate only comes to \$3.17.

The girls' efforts even caught the attention of Idaho Falls Mayor Jared Fuhrman, who praised the girls' work and presented them with certificates last week.

"When I heard what these two young ladies did for the senior center, I couldn't let it go unnoticed," the mayor said. "It's such a great, great thing, and I hope other teens will see what they have done and use it as an example."

As the girls exchanged hugs with gracious seniors, it was obvious that seeing the successful project through meant a lot to the students.

"I think we did really well," Miranda said. "I just can't stop smiling right now."

Kaylani was equally moved.

"It means a lot," she said. "It's life-changing."